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Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----------251440 043936 /47
O 251333Z FEB 77
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5024

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 1390

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IS
SUBJECT: THE RABIN VISIT: WHAT DOES RABIN WANT FROM IT?

1. PRIME MINISTER RABIN HAS MADE NO SECRET OF THE FACT THAT HE WANTED TO VISIT THE U.S. AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITY IN ORDER TO BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH THE LEADERS OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATION. HE WAS, THEREFORE, EAGER TO ACCEPT THE PRESIDENT'S INVITATION CONVEYED TO HIM BY SECRETARY VANCE AND WAS PARTICULARLY PLEASED THAT THE ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER WOULD BE THE FIRST HEAD OF GOVERNMENT FROM THE AREA TO BE THE GUEST OF THE PRESIDENT. NOW THAT HE HAS BEEN RECONFIRMED AS LEADER OF THE ISRAELI LABOR PARTY AND IS A FAIR BET TO BE PRIME MINISTER AGAIN AFTER THE ELECTIONS IN MAY, RABIN CAN PROCEED TO WASHINGTON WITH RENEWED CONFIDENCE.

2. THE RABIN VISIT HAS TO BE SEEN AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THE DISCUSSIONS HELD WITH THE SECRETARY IN ISRAEL THIS MONTH. MANY OF THE ISSUES WHICH WERE RAISED WITH THE SECRETARY WILL BE AGAIN PUT FORWARD BY RABIN IN WASHINGTON. IT IS LIKELY THAT HE WILL ATTEMPT TO ELICIT STATEMENTS OF U.S. POLICY ON A NUMBER OF THE SUBJECTS IN WHICH ISRAEL IS INTERESTED.

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3. AVAILABLE EVIDENCE INDICATES THAT RABIN WILL TRY TO OBTAIN AS MANY AS POSSIBLE OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS (NOT NECESSARILY RANKED IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE TO HIM);
(A) REASSURANCE FROM THE HIGHEST LEVEL THAT U.S. SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL REMAINS FIRM AND THAT THE SECURITY OF ISRAEL IS A KEY ELEMENT IN U.S. MIDDLE EAST POLICY. (ISRAELI LEADERS HAVE COMPLAINED ABOUT OUR USE OF THE

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PHRASE "SURVIVAL AND SECURITY," MAINTAINING THAT THE
JEWISH PEOPLE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR OWN
SURVIVAL THROUGHOUT HISTORY. "SECURITY" FOR THE STATE
OF ISRAEL IS WHAT THEY ARE INTERESTED IN).
(B) A RENEWAL OF THE COMMITMENT THAT THE U.S. WILL TAKE NO STEPS
IN THE MIDDLE EAST DISPUTE WHICH MIGHT HARM ISRAEL'S
INTERESTS AS WELL AS AN UNDERSTANDING THAT THERE WOULD
BE PRIOR CONSULTATIONS ON MATTERS OF INTEREST TO ISRAEL.
(C) A RENEWAL OF THE PRESIDENT'S PROMISE - PERHAPS
IN A COMMUNIQUE - THAT THE U.S. WILL NOT BE A PARTY TO
AN "IMPOSED" PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST.
(D) A COMMITMENT THAT THE U.S. WILL CONSULT WITH
ISRAEL ON MIDDLE EAST ISSUES WHICH ARISE IN THE UN AND
WILL EMPLOY ITS VETO TO PROTECT ISRAEL'S INTEREST.
(E) A STATEMENT THAT THE U.S. WILL ONLY AGREE TO
A GENEVA CONFERENCE ON THE BASIS OF RESOLUTIONS 242
AND 338 AND ONLY WITH THE ORIGINAL PARTICIPANTS.
(F) A U.S. PROMISE TO KEEP THE SOVIETS AT ARMS
LENGTH, INSOFAR AS POSSIBLE, ON ISSUES RELATING TO MIDDLE
EAST PEACE.
(G) THE FORESTALLING OF ANY PRECIPITATE MOVE BY
THE US IN THE DIRECTION OF GIVING INCREASED RECOGNITION
TO THE PLO OR OF CONSIDERING A SOLUTION OF THE
PALESTINIAN QUESTION OUTSIDE OF THE JORDANIAN CONTEXT.
(H) AN UNDERSTANDING FOR - AND HOPEFULLY AN ACCEPTANCE
OF - THE ISRAELI POSITION THAT OF THE TRIAD AGREED WITH
THE SECRETARY (PEACE, WITHDRAWAL, AND THE PALESTINIANS)
OVERRIDING PRIORITY BE GIVEN TO THE "PEACE" ISSUE. AS
DEFINED BY RABIN, THIS MEANS END OF THE STATE OF WAR,
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DEFENSIBLE BORDERS FOR ISRAEL, AND THE NORMALIZATION OF
INTER-STATE RELATIONS IN ALL FIELDS. WHEN THIS DEFINI-
TION IS AGREED TO BY THE ARABS, ISRAEL WOULD BE WILLING
TO CONSIDER THE "WITHDRAWAL" AND "PALESTINIAN"ISSUES;
THE REVERSE ORDER IS, OF COURSE, DESIRED BY THE ARABS.
(I) THE TEMPERING OF WHAT RABIN WOULD CONSIDER ANY
U.S. OVER-OPTIMISM AS TO THE TIMING AND PROSPECTS FOR A
FAR-REACHING MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT.

4. IN ADDITION TO THESE ITEMS RELATED TO THE GENERAL
QUESTION OF PEACE, RABIN WILL HAVE IN MIND CERTAIN VERY
SPECIFIC ISSUES AND WILL PRESS HARD TO OBTAIN THEM.
THESE INCLUDE:

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(A) SOME FORM OF COORDINATING MECHANISM WHICH WOULD FACILITATE FOREIGN MILITARY SALES BY ISRAEL TO THIRD COUNTRIES, AVOIDING THE IMPACT OF NEGATIVE DECISIONS BY THE U.S. ON ISRAELI SALES AS IN THE CASE OF KFIR'S TO ECUADOR.
(B) PROVISION OF AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE CONCUSSION BOMB.
(C) THE RIGHT TO CO-PRODUCE THE F-16. (ISRAEL HAS ALMOST BLITHELY IGNORED U.S. COMMITMENTS TO ITS NATO PARTNERS ON THIS ISSUE).
(D) THE RIGHT TO USE MILITARY ASSISTANCE FUNDS FOR THE PRODUCTION OF THE CHARIOT TANK IN ISRAEL FOR THE ISRAELI ARMY.
(E) A REAFFIRMATION OF THE U.S. COMMITMENT TO PROVIDE THE FLIR TO ISRAEL; AND
(F) A PROMISE OF AN INCREASE OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE.
(IF RABIN IS NOT SUCCESSFUL IN GETTING THE PRESIDENT TO INCREASE THE $1 BILLION REQUEST FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE FOR FY 78, HE MAY URGE A COMMITMENT FOR AN INCREASE IN SUBSEQUENT YEARS). (SEPARATE TELEGRAMS DEAL WITH THESE ISSUES AT MORE LENGTH).

5. IN ADDITION TO THESE SPECIFIC ITEMS, RABIN WILL PROBABLY WANT TO DISCUSS LEBANON. HE MAY WELL ASK THE U.S. TO AGREE TO SOME FORM OF "NEUTRALIZATION" IN SOUTH
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LEBANON. NEITHER THE EXACT FORM THIS WOULD TAKE NOR THE AREA IT WOULD COVER HAS BEEN DEFINED BY THE ISRAELIS, BUT RABIN'S OPTIMUM HOPE WOULD BE TO GET A COMMITMENT - PERHAPS ACQUIESCED IN BY DAMASCUS AND BEIRUT - THAT SYRIAN FORCES WOULD NOT COME CLOSER TO

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THE ISRAELI BORDER THAN THE LINE FROM JAZZIN TO SIDON.
THE OBVERSE OF THIS COIN IS THAT THE U.S. WOULD BE
EXPECTED TO SEE THAT THIS NEUTRALITY WAS NOT VIOLATED,
AND TO DO SO AT ISRAELI BEHEST.

6. RABIN MAY ALSO ASK FOR U.S. SUPPORT WITH VARIOUS
AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND WITH SPAIN IN REGARD TO THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL. (THERE IS
LITTLE POSSIBILITY THAT HE WILL RAISE THE RECOGNITION ISSUE IN
REGARD TO THE SOVIET UNION AND THE EASTERN EUROPEAN
COUNTRIES).

7. RABIN WILL ALSO WANT TO RENEW HIS ACQUAINTANCESHIP
ON THE HILL, TO MEET THE NEW LEADERSHIP, AND TO MAKE
CERTAIN THAT ISRAELI POSITIONS ARE UNDERSTOOD AND, TO
THE MAXIMUM EXTENT POSSIBLE, ACCEPTED AND SUPPORTED BY
INFLUENTIAL MEMBERS OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE.

8. THERE ARE CERTAIN ISSUES WHICH HAVE ARISEN BETWEEN
THE U.S. AND ISRAEL WHICH WE ARE FAIRLY CONFIDENT
RABIN WILL NOT RAISE; THE DEPARTMENT MAY FEEL THESE
ISSUES SHOULD BE RAISED BY OUR SIDE:
(A) THE SETTLEMENTS ISSUE. THERE HAS BEEN NO
DIMINUTION IN THE RATE OF ESTABLISHMENT OF SETTLEMENTS
IN THE OCCUPIED AREAS. WHENEVER THE U.S. RAISES THIS
ISSUE, THE ISRAELIS COMPLAIN THAT "IT IS NOT THE PROPER
TIME." IN THEIR EYES, THAT "PROPER" TIME MAY NEVER
COME - BUT THE SETTLEMENTS KEEP GROWING AND ARE AN
ISSUE WHICH WILL HAVE TO BE CONFRONTED IN PEACE
NEGOTIATIONS.
(B) OIL EXPLORATION IN THE GULF OF SUEZ. DISAGREE-
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MENT ON THE LEGAL ISSUES HAS NOT PREVENTED THE ISRAELIS
FROM ADOPTING AN AGGRESSIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD U.S. FIRMS
DRILLING IN THE GULF, WHERE THEY HAVE NOT BEHAVED IN A
MANNER BEFITTING FRIENDLY COUNTRIES. THEY FEEL THAT
THEY HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ESTABLISH THE PRINCIPLE THAT
ISRAEL IS, TO ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES, SOVEREIGN EAST
OF THE MEDIAN LINE WHICH IT HAS PROCLAIMED, AND THEY ARE
NOT GOING TO BE DETERRED BY CONSIDERATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL
LAW. MEANWHILE, THEY CONTINUE TO SEARCH FOR OIL IN THE
OCCUPIED SINAI AND OFF THE SINAI COAST IN THE MEDITER-
RANEAN.
(C) ISRAELI-SOUTH AFRICAN RELATIONS. THESE TAKE
PLACE IN A SHADOW WORLD BUT ARE EXTENSIVE AND APPARENTLY
OF MUTUAL BENEFIT TO BOTH SIDES. ISRAEL'S SUPPLY OF
MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO SOUTH AFRICA PRESUMABLY WILL NOT
FACILITATE OUR EFFORTS TO HELP BRING PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS
TO THE DISPUTES IN THE SOUTHERN HALF OF THAT CONTINENT.

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